

ONC Awardees:

As you may already have heard, I will be leaving as the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology this spring and will be returning to academic life. This is in accordance with the arrangement made when I accepted this position two years ago.

I want to take this opportunity to assure you that the transition at ONC will be smooth, and that our commitments to grantees and other partners will be secure. As you know, together we moved rapidly to put in place the vitally needed supporting structure of programs to assist providers and help lead the Nation to a future of HIT-assisted care. Likewise, we have already obligated virtually all Recovery Act funding to ensure smooth functioning of our HITECH-supported programs.

More important, I want to express my appreciation for your work, and the satisfaction I have had in working with you. We have truly accomplished substantial results in a short time frame:

- Adoption has turned up: from 2008 to 2010, the proportion of primary care physicians who had adopted a basic EHR increased by half, from 19.6 percent to 29.6 percent.
- A significant proportion of providers were already indicating in the latter part of 2010 that they plan to achieve meaningful use objectives and qualify for incentive payments: 81 percent of hospitals, and 41 percent of office-based physicians.
- A total of 291 EHR products have already been certified to support meaningful use objectives and qualify for use under the incentive payments program.
- Some 38,000 providers have enrolled in REC assistance programs.
- Workforce programs at 84 community colleges and 15 universities have enrolled over 3,400 students in forward-looking curricula aligned with meaningful use and quality improvement.

We have achieved these accomplishments together, as a hard-working team with a unique opportunity to make a difference for health care in America.

I know you will continue to work productively with the outstanding staff now assembled at ONC; with our partners at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services; and most of all, with the health care providers and other entities that we serve.

Thank you for your support over the past two years. I take with me my admiration for the dedicated men and women who are helping build a better future for health care, and I leave with you my best wishes for continuing success.

David Blumenthal